



PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI, & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Reflecting the growing strength of the local economy, the Panhandle's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged down from 6.9 percent in August to 6.7 percent in September. A year earlier, in September 2003, the Panhandle unemployment rate was 7.6 percent. Over the 12-month period, 5,200 Panhandle residents found employment.

Total Nonfarm Payroll employment grew a substantial 4.9 percent between September 2003 and September 2004. As Panhandle Table 1 shows, every major sector except *Wood Products Manufacturing* added jobs. *Construction* added the most jobs at 780. The average annual wage for *Construction* jobs in 2003 was \$27,540, substantially above the \$25,929 average wage for all *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs*. The construction boom explains the 100 jobs added in *Financial Activities*, which includes lending institutions, title insurance, and real estate. *Professional & Business Services* ran a fairly close second to *Construction*—adding 620 jobs at call centers, temporary employment agencies, and a variety of services. The 2003 average annual wage in that sector was \$26,914. *Leisure & Hospitality*—paying an average annual wage of \$11,474 in 2003—added 560 jobs as tourism surged. In addition, most of the 100 jobs added by tribal governments came at the Coeur d'Alene and Kootenai Tribes' casinos and hotels. *Retail Trade* added 370 jobs, mostly at building materials stores and discount stores. *Retail's* average annual wage was \$23,202 in 2003. *Educational & Health Services*—paying an average annual wage of \$24,039 in 2003—added 310 jobs between September 2003 and September 2004. Most of those new jobs were added at doctor's offices, clinics, and residential care facilities. In addition, the Panhandle's five community hospitals, which are included in *Government Administration*, added more than 80 jobs.

Panhandle Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

	Sep 2004*	Aug 2004	Sep 2003	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	98,170	97,780	93,470	0.4	5.0
Unemployed	6,600	6,760	7,100	-2.4	-7.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	6.7	6.9	7.6		
Total Employment	91,570	91,020	86,370	0.6	6.0
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	98,290	99,200	93,410	-0.9	5.2
Unemployed	4,800	4,880	5,170	-1.6	-7.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.9	4.9	5.5		
Total Employment	93,490	94,320	88,240	-0.9	5.9
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	75,700	75,960	72,170	-0.3	4.9
Goods-Producing Industries	15,450	15,520	14,370	-0.5	7.5
Natural Resources & Mining	1,670	1,650	1,510	1.2	10.6
Construction	6,460	6,550	5,680	-1.4	13.7
Manufacturing	7,320	7,320	7,180	0.0	1.9
Wood Product Manufacturing	2,760	2,750	2,810	0.4	-1.8
Other Manufacturing	4,560	4,570	4,370	-0.2	4.3
Service-Providing Industries	60,250	60,440	57,800	-0.3	4.2
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	14,190	14,310	13,560	-0.8	4.6
Wholesale Trade	1,510	1,530	1,360	-1.3	11.0
Retail Trade	10,810	10,880	10,440	-0.6	3.5
Utilities	390	390	390	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,480	1,510	1,370	-2.0	8.0
Information	1,100	1,110	1,120	-0.9	-1.8
Financial Activities	3,130	3,210	3,030	-2.5	3.3
Professional & Business Services	7,260	7,250	6,640	0.1	9.3
Educational & Health Services	7,220	7,320	6,910	-1.4	4.5
Leisure & Hospitality	9,960	10,720	9,400	-7.1	6.0
Other Services	2,310	2,510	2,270	-8.0	1.8
Government Education	4,900	3,840	4,830	27.6	1.4
Government Administration	8,880	8,870	8,840	0.1	0.5
Government Tribes	1,300	1,300	1,200	0.0	8.3

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonner County

- A 104,000-square-foot Home Depot is under construction on 10 acres at Kootenai Cutoff Road and Starr Lane in Ponderay. The 24-hour store is expected to open in early January when it will hire between 100 and 150 people.

Kootenai County

- Two manufacturers are moving from southern California to 11837 North Tracy Road in Hayden. Form Physics LLC, a metal injection molding company, moved from San Diego in November. It makes small metal parts including orthodontics, medical instruments, and

medical components. Soon Pathways Thermal Technology will follow. This company currently is located in Corona, 45 miles southeast of Los Angeles, and manufactures custom furnaces used by Form Physics and other companies. Both manufacturers were attracted by the area's lower building, power, and workers' compensation costs, as well as its quality of life. Together, they will employ about 22 people.

- Rathdrum's newest manufacturing operation is Taco Chic Salsa at Main and MacCartney. At the factory, which includes a gift shop and tasting bar, owner Juanita Cormack and her employees make salsa based on a 100-year-old family recipe. Rathdrum is a town of 5,500 residents that provides an atmosphere conducive to the growth of manufacturing. Four years ago, Rathdrum was home to 27 manufacturing businesses employing 280 people. Today, it is home to 34 manufacturing businesses employing 390 people.
- The Rathdrum Star recently debuted as a weekly newspaper covering the rapidly growing area including Rathdrum and Spirit Lake. Publisher-owner Tom Burnett and three employees produce the newspaper in the former Keg Tavern building across from Rathdrum City Hall.
- American Wave International (AWI) moved its headquarters from California to Coeur d'Alene this summer, and recently opened a retail outlet in the former YMCA building at 606 West River Avenue in the Fort Grounds area of Coeur d'Alene. Through a dozen retail outlets across the United States and also from its website at www.americanwave.com, AWI sells top-quality, American-made wet suits, surf gear, and protective clothing and accessories for football, baseball, and other team sports. Items sold on the Internet are shipped from Coeur d'Alene.
- North Idaho College's (NIC) Workforce Training Center recently celebrated the 10th anniversary of its move to the Riverbend Commerce Park in Post Falls from the main campus in Coeur d'Alene. When the center opened at Riverbend, it offered 39 classes; today, it offers 553 business, community education, and computer certification classes. The 30,000-square-foot center includes three computer-training labs. It continues to serve businesses by providing customized training programs, designed to provide the exact skills required by individual businesses. When Jobs Plus or other economic development organizations recruit businesses to the area, those new businesses often rely on the NIC Workforce Training Center to provide training for the employees they hire.

- Family physician Don Baker recently opened Spirit Lake Family Care in Spirit Lake, a town of 1,440 residents in northwestern Kootenai County. He's the first doctor to have an office there in 14 years. As the county's population has grown, its health care sector has grown rapidly from 3,600 jobs five years ago to 5,300 jobs today. Although most of the growth is concentrated in the area around Kootenai Medical Center in Coeur d'Alene, other areas of the county also have increased the availability of medical services.
- Hagadone Hospitality is proposing to expand its Coeur d'Alene Resort and to build a botanical garden at the entrance to downtown Coeur d'Alene's shopping district. Its proposal depends on the willingness of the city to shut down two blocks of Sherman Avenue, the main street in downtown Coeur d'Alene, to create a pedestrian corridor. The company proposes to build a 175-room tower next to the company's new Bonsai Bistro on Sherman Avenue. It won't build the tower if its guests have to cross a busy street to reach the conference rooms, spa, restaurants, shops, and entertainment at the main Coeur d'Alene Resort. The new tower would probably host 88,000 additional tourists a year and employ 130 people. Downtown businesses and city officials are analyzing the proposed street closure to determine its effects on parking, downtown shopping, and traffic flow. If the city approves Hagadone Hospitality's plan, construction would begin within the next two years.
- Hagadone Hospitality also is planning a \$20 million overhaul of the main Coeur d'Alene Resort building. In January, it will begin a \$1.3 million renovation of Beverley's, the prize-winning gourmet restaurant overlooking Lake Coeur d'Alene from the resort's seventh floor. In 2005, it also will renovate the rooms in the Lake Tower and remodel the resort lobby. It also plans to expand and remodel its spa to create a world-class facility.

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